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public print of the ideal commissioner, trustee, and librarian.

Several of the commission secretaries have informed me they do not dare to do much publicity work, else they could not meet the demands with their appropriation. If the greatest handicap to progressive and constructive library work, is, as some think, lack of funds, it seems to me the easiest and most effective way to get more money is to publish your needs, your victories and your opportunities, keeping a whirlwind of ideas going to get public sentiment behind the big thing you are trying to do. Can you think of an easier and more effective bit of publicity work than to have a whole state clamoring for something they cannot get, and are entitled to have? No legislature could withstand such an argument for larger appropriations. Another publicity opportunity largely overlooked by the commission secretaries is the getting of newspaper articles about their work into the daily papers, until every man, woman and child in the state knows there is a library commission and that through it every library interest of the state is reached, nurtured and developed—that the library commission is a dynamic force in the educational propaganda of the state.

Perhaps the most needed publicity work

commissions can do is to push the sentiment that the library stands side by side with, if not a little ahead of, the educational forces of the state, demanding for librarians professional recognition, with salaries in proportion to the dignity of their work, urging that the greatest privilege and honor in any community is serving with intelligence on a library board, no matter whether it is in a town of 2,000 or a city of 200,000.

Commissions can help the small library in a publicity way.

By reporting in the commission bulletin effective methods tried in various libraries of the state.

By preparing newspaper articles suitable for publication in any local paper advertising the library.

By getting advance information from libraries of lists to be published and arranging for coöperation.

By stimulating interest in and directing such things as library week, exhibits at county fairs, etc.

By arranging for district meetings to advertise the libraries.

By giving talks on library service at dedications, library days, etc., to advertise the local library.

By advising librarians as to publicity methods.

A PUBLICITY EXPERT FOR LIBRARIES

BY C. H. COMPTON, *Seattle Public Library*

In presenting the proposition of a publicity expert for libraries, I should like to have what I say considered as a message from the Pacific Northwest Library Association to the American Library Association.

We librarians of the Pacific Northwest, some 150 strong, believe that a long step towards the solution of the publicity problem of libraries lies in the adoption of this idea. We have been fathoming the

idea for three years, and through the publicity committee of our association have been endeavoring to bring it to the attention of libraries throughout the country. It already has the endorsement of a number of state library associations, the hearty approval of many librarians and the support of the publicity committee of the A. L. A. A plan for financing coöperatively a publicity expert was laid before the Executive Board at its meeting in December by

Mr. Kerr, chairman of the publicity committee of A. L. A. This is the progress made to date.

In order that we may get a clear, fresh view of this proposition, I wish for a minute we might, if possible, forget that we are librarians, put aside our professional prejudices and set notions. Let us imagine that we are the directors of a big corporation and that we are here assembled to decide upon the best policy of advertising its business. This corporation has 8,000 branches in cities, towns, villages and country districts, but whether large or small, they are all dealing in the same commodity. Do you think that after having considered the matter with due deliberation we would recommend that each branch should advertise its wares as it saw fit, without assistance from any source? I do not believe there is a person here who would maintain that such a plan of advertising would be the most efficient. The natural way, the efficient way, the economical way, would be to have a central organization to direct the advertising for the whole corporation. But the problem of library advertising is much the same as that of this imaginary corporation, yet we find that we are following the hit and miss plan, every one of the over 8,000 libraries advertising for itself—no unity in it, and we have as a result just the kind of publicity we might expect from such a procedure—largely ineffective, unattractive and extremely uneconomical. It seems to me that we will never remedy this condition until we have a publicity man connected with A. L. A. headquarters to direct library publicity and to counsel and advise with librarians throughout the land.

Now rapidly let me suggest a few things which a publicity expert could do. He could prepare advertising material, placards, leaflets, etc., which could be used by different libraries throughout the country. A number of library supply firms are seeing the commercial possibilities of this

and are selling placards at three to four times the actual cost of printing.

A publicity man could edit coöperative lists like Mr. Wheeler's—not compile them, but see to it that the lists were attractive from an advertising standpoint. A publicity expert could obtain national publicity for libraries through magazines and metropolitan newspapers. This would help all libraries.

A publicity expert could well devote some of his publicity to the need of greater financial support for libraries.

A publicity expert could, upon request, give advice and suggestions to librarians when meeting publicity problems peculiar to different communities.

Now, just a word as to coöperative publicity which has been tried and proved successful. The lists compiled by Mr. Wheeler, being printed in large quantities (50,000) were sold at half the cost of printing in small quantities.

The Publicity Committee of the Pacific Northwest Library Association sold placards coöperatively in quantities of 25 or more at a cost of 4 cents each. The price of printing in small quantities would have been prohibitive and at the present time a library supply firm has copied them and is selling them at 10 cents each.

Perhaps these two examples may indicate in a slight way what might be done with coöperative publicity under the direction of a paid publicity man. For the first year or two the salary of such a publicity man would have to be paid by contributions from coöoperating libraries. After that I believe that the sale of publicity material would be sufficient to make the project self-supporting.

In the last few years we have heard it asserted many times, Man is by nature a fighting animal. But the question I want to ask is this, "Is the genus librarian a coöoperating animal?" The success of such a proposition as I have briefly outlined to you depends on the answer. Time will tell.